[Translation]

Closed Textile Mills

*54. DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIA : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to states:

(a) the total number of NTC and State Textile Corporations owned as well as mills in the private sector closed during the last three years in the country, as on date, State-wise;

(b) the number of textile mills closed in Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh during the above period along with the number of workers rendered jobless in each mill; and

(c) the position of their rehabilitation and payments of provident fund in each mill?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) The number of mills closed in the last 3 years State-wise as on date is as under:—

Andhra Pradesh	11
Assam	0
Bihar	1
Gujarat	22
Haryana	3
Karnataka	2
Kerala	1
Madhya Pradesh	1
Maharashtra	8
Orissa	0
Punjab	2
Rajasthan	2
Tamil Nadu	25
Uttar Pradesh	3
West Bengal	2
Delhi	3
Manipur	0
Daman & Diu	1

As far as the mills under National Textile Corporation (NTC) are concerned, no mill under NTC has been closed under the provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act, as wages and salaries continue to be paid. However, Ajudhia Textile Mills. Delhi under NTC (DP&R) Ltd. has been closed as per the orders/directions of the Supreme Court of India regarding relocation/closure of the polluting industries. The workers of Ajudhia Textile Mills have been paid enhanced additional compensation as per the orders of the Supreme Court.

(b) and (c) M/s Indore Textiles Ltd., Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh has been closed, affecting 1792 workers. As per the provisions of the Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act., 1985, the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) is entrusted with the responsibility of taking measures for rehabilitation of the sick industrial companies. The Government has also established Textile Workers Rehabilitation Fund Scheme to provide interim relief to the workers rendered jobless due to permanent/partial closure of the mills. As far as the private sector mills and mills of the State Textile Corporations are concerned, details of the P.F. dues/ payments are not maintained.

[English]

Quantitative Restriction

*55. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL :
SHRI AJAY CHAKRABORTY :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE to be pleased to state:

(a) whether some foreign countries are pressurising India to remove Quantitative Restrictions (QR) on imports;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(c) the manner in which the Government propose to settle the phasing out of Quantitative Restrictions with United States and other countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c) Pursuant to the meeting of the Committee on Balance of Payments Restrictions of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) held on 20–21 January 1997, India had presented a plan for the elimination of all residual quantitative restrictions on imports maintained for balance of payments purposes to the WTO. This plan was considered by the WTO Committee on Balance of Payments Restrictions in June-July 1997, when noting the divergence of opinion among WTO Members on the plan, it was agreed to conclude the consultations. Subsequently, six WTO Members, namely, Australia, Canada, the European Communities, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United States of America, requested consultations with India under Article XXII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994 and the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes. During these consultations agreement has been reached with Canada, the EC and

Switzerland in respect of the time-schedules for the elimination of residual quantitative restrictions on imports maintained for balance of payments purposes. Negotiations towards a mutually satisfactory solution with Australia and New Zealand are in an advanced stage. At the request of the USA, a panel has been constituted on 18 November 1997 to examine the US allegation that the continued maintenance of quantitative restrictions on imports by India is inconsistent with India's obligations under the WTO Agreement.

Cuts in PLR by Banks/FI

*56 SHRI A.C. JOS : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether various banks and financial institutions have started announcing cut in their prime lending rates (PLR) on commercial loans following the direction set by the Busy Season Credit Policy of the RBI;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the impact, this measure will have on industrial production?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported that following the announcement of monetary and credit policy for the second half of 1997–98 on October 21, 1997, several commercial banks and major financial institutions have further reduced their Prime Lending Rates (PLRs) as indicated below:—

Prime Lending Rates (PLRs)

Sr. No.	Type of bank/financial institutions	PLR before busy season policy	PLR after busy season policy	No. of banks announcing change
1.	Public Sector	13.5–15.0	12.5–13.5	14
2.	Private sector	14.0–17.0	13.0–14.0	7
3.	Foreign banks	14.5–17.5	14.0–15.0	14
4.	IDBI	14.5	12.5–13.5	—
5.	IFCI	14.5	12.5–13.5	—
6.	ICICI	12.5–14.5	12.0–13.5	—
7.	SIDBI	14.0	12.5–13.0	—

The measures envisaged in the credit policy are expected to contribute to the growth in bank credit which in turn would increase industrial activity.

[Translation]

Rate of Inflation

*57. SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether consequent upon implementation of the recommendations of the Fifth Central Pay Commission, the rate of inflation would increase;

(b) if so, the extent to which it would increase; and

(c) its likely impact on the domestic market?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBRAM) : (a) to (c) The increase in the purchasing power of Central Government employees was expected to generate some buoyancy in demand. However, the effect so far has been limited and the current inflation rate continues to remain below 4 per cent itself is an 11-year low inflation rate.

[English]

Mini-Ratnas

*58. SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT :
SHRI SANAT MEHTA :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the names and number of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) which have been given the special status of Mini-Ratnas;

(b) the criteria adopted to identify such PSUs;

(c) whether the Government have decided to grant financial and functional autonomy to such PSUs;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the reaction of the Trade Unions in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (e) The Government have given Mini-Ratnas status to the public enterprises which have made profits continuously for the last three years, which have positive net worth, which have not defaulted in the repayment of loans and interest and which do not seek budgetary support from the Government. Based on the profitability and networth criteria, 95 PSUs, as per statement attached herewith have tentatively been identified as Mini-Ratnas. Final inclusion will be decided by the Administrative Ministries after checking all criteria, including non-default on Govt. loans. The Mini-Ratna enterprises have been delegated enhanced powers subject to certain guidelines issued in this regard, which include the powers to incur capital expenditure upto enhanced limits, to enter into joint ventures; to formalise technological and strategic alliances; to